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ABSTRACT

This report, submitted as an appeal for continuation of funds, summarizes the achievements of the Miami Treatment Alternatives to Street Crime (TASC) project. The project is designed to identify drug-abusing arrestees and divert them to either jail treatment or one of the Miami community's drug treatment programs. Included in this report are cost analysis figures regarding rehabilitation vs. incarceration along with an enumeration of benefits the community has received from this project. (HMV)

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# MIAMI TREATMENT ALTERNATIVES TO STREET CRIME PROJECT
# A REVIEW AND ANALYSIS
# OF PERFORMANCE, ACCOMPLISHMENT AND IMPACT

## INTRODUCTION

The Metropolitan Dade County Rehabilitative Services Division has administered the Treatment Alternatives to Street Crime (TASC) Project since its inception in November of 1973. This project was made financially possible by a grant from the United States Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (L.E.A.A.) and fractional matching funds from Dade County for an aggregate cost to date of approximately $1,200,000. During its first two and one half years of operation the TASC program has earned considerable distinction, recognition and praise from public and private agencies, organizations, and individuals. This acclaim has been the result of the project's unparalleled scope of success and achievement in the field of diversion programming, being the largest, while concomitantly attaining the lowest recidivist ratios for a program of its kind nationally. In recognition of this outstanding performance and achievement, the Dade County TASC program has been chosen as a national model for the pre and post-trial diversion of addict offenders.

Due to the current discretionary funding policy of the L.E.A.A., TASC projects are funded on a two year basis only. In consideration of TASC's exemplary record, however, L.E.A.A. officials have been considering the funding of a supplemental

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grant application to continue TASC operations until October 1, 1976 from the current expiration date of March, 1976. This supplemental extension is now contingent only upon TASC inclusion in the County budget for 1976-77. We would therefore like to take this opportunity to bring to your attention via a review and assessment, the significant impact and contribution we believe TASC has made to and upon the criminal justice system, the treatment community, the addict population, and the people of Dade County. This synopsis will be supplemented by a brief overview of the project's origin.

IMPETUS AND RATIONALE

The Miami TASC project was initially precipitated by the award of $50,000 planning grant for both planning and the development of community support. The early planning, development, and community support efforts were coordinated under the auspices of Mr. James Ward, now Director of Rehabilitative Services Division under the Department of Human Resources. The findings of these early research and review endeavors yielded a wealth of data from which it was evident that Dade County was in the midst of a drug abuse and drug related crime epidemic of unprecedented and dramatically increasing dimensions, i.e.: from statistical analysis of data obtained from an epidemiological study of inmates at the Dade County Jail, and a study conducted by the County Manager's Office and Urban Institute, it was ascertained that

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- A 23% increase in drug arrests took place in Dade County between October of 1971 and September, 1972.
- An increase in the cost of drug related crime to the community occurred which was estimated to be between $8 and $41 million dollars.
- 22% of inmates interviewed admitted to heroin use.
- The average drug abuser is arrested 1.4 times per year.
- The estimated number of heroin addicts in Dade County was 7 - 10,000 with individual drug habits of approximately $40 per day. The number of poly-drug abusers while unknown at the time, was estimated to be far larger than that calculated for heroin addicts.
- In 1971 there were 2,319 drug related arrests in Dade County.

It thus became apparent to the planners that drug abuse and crime were intimately and obviously linked in a vicious repetitive cycle.

Further intensive examination of the roles and relationships of the criminal justice system and the treatment community themselves, and between them and the addict, were essentially antagonistic, ineffective, and unproductive. Despite the ample expense of resources and efforts of these institutions, the inherent lack of cooperation and coordination negated and precluded any viable solution to the drug abuse and drug related crime problems. This lack of synergy coupled with the indigenous prejudices of each were in many instances aggravating these conditions.

Some examples of these dysfunctional conditions which the authors felt should be addressed were:

- Inappropriate response on the part of the criminal justice system which neither identified drug abusers nor provided or offered proper or adequate treatment.
- Judges had developed patterns of sending addicts to a set of programs without regard to the suitability of the referral.
- Treatment programs were expending considerable effort and resources in the competition for limited number of clients in the courts and jail.
- Courts had no objective means of discriminating between programs.
- Research demonstrated that the vested interest of the treatment programs were too predominant to expect objective client information from them.
- Law enforcement personnel often had little training and/or knowledge of and in the handling and treatment of addict offenders and were chiefly interested in their arrest and imprisonment only. This widespread attitude on their part contributed to the high levels of tension in the jails while concurrently intensifying the unwillingness of the treatment community to cooperate with them.
- Lack of sensible reentry programs which would provide ex-drug abusers with requisite marketable skills.
- An inability on the part of existing treatment programs to accept increased demands that could result from increased referrals from the criminal justice system when their population was at or near matrix.
- Treatment programs were patently incapable and/or indisposed to the task of monitoring and reporting treatment progress and returning to the courts large numbers of unsuitable clients.

These were only some of the salient issues project personnel observed at this time. They therefore reasoned that an appropriate response to these problems principally required an agency to coordinate the interface between the criminal justice system and the treatment community to interrupt the drug crime cycle. Since no meaningful opportunity for drug rehabilitation existed in the jails, and a substantial community treatment effort was already underway, they felt the cooperation could be commenced by a diversion mechanism from incarceration to community treatment via identification. They also theorized that not all clients could or would be suitable for immediate release to community treatment and an in-jail treatment program should thus be established for this purpose.

In order to ameliorate the existing conditions and effect the interface, the program adopted the following strategy as a means to realize its objectives.

- Provide a program of early identification of drug dependent persons entering into the criminal justice system.
- Attain exclusive representation in the courts for all county drug programs.
- Secure interagency agreements for screening and referral of probation and pre-trial intervention clients as required.
- Establishment of agreements to grant withheld adjudication or mitigation of sentence for successful clients.
- Development of an efficient tracking and evaluation system to provide the courts with impartial up-to-date information on client progress.

- Creation of a comprehensive vocational, job development, training and placement capability.
- Institution of jail treatment and evaluation unit.
- Obtain data currently unavailable for planning proper rehabilitation and care for the drug dependent.
- Development of a system of court referrals to the Comprehensive Drug Program.
- Coordination of court appearances for large numbers of TASC clients.
- Diversion of approximately 1,800 drug abusers to community treatment.

ATTAINMENT OF GOALS

Since the initial statement of the program's objectives over two and one half years ago, TASC has succeeded almost 100% in their realization.

A brief survey and appraisal of our performance will reveal the following:

- TASC has conducted over 27,000 interviews in the jail and the data collected has been incorporated into many studies.
- TASC has identified over 4,100 admitted drug abusers for the courts.
- TASC has supplied the courts with over 1,500 evaluations and progress reports.
- TASC lawyers and personnel have acted as amicus curia for the courts on over 2,000 occasions.
- TASC has screened over 1,000 probationers for the Probation and Parole Departments and identified over 500 admitted abusers.
- TASC has diverted over 1,650 drug dependent clients to community treatment.

- TASC has been acknowledged exclusive representation for the Comprehensive Drug Program in the courts and in the jail. A recent study (by Bennett and McBride) has noted that the number of jail passes held by community treatment personnel were 180 before TASC was instituted at the jail and have now been reduced to only 25, with the majority of those belonging to TASC personnel.

- Greater than 90% of pre and post-trial release clients who were deemed as making adequate progress in treatment were allowed to continue their treatment in lieu of incarceration. Additionally, 95% of graduates had their sentences commuted or vacated.

- The TASC Vocational Unit has provided counseling, training, placement, and/or assessment for over 500 clients and has been nominated to serve as a national model for all appropriate National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) funded programs.

- The TASC Jail Treatment programs have served over 1,900 clients and have earned praise and endorsement from many law enforcement and correction administrators and personnel.

- The program has furnished treatment and diversion to over 300 clients whose charges were subsequently voided and whose incarceration was therefore unnecessary for the individual and the jail.

- The TASC Tracking Unit is considered to be the best of any TASC program and has been suggested as a model for the entire Rehabilitative Services Division.

COST SAVING CONSIDERATION

-The program currently serves approximately 400 felons and misdemeanants. It cost $4,500 to keep an individual in a Dade County jail for one year (with no drug treatment rehabilitation option in the absence of TASC) versus only $2,800 per client per year for community treatment service.

- The cost of keeping TASC's 550 present clients in jail for one year would be $2,475,000 without any rehabilitation. We could therefore expect most to return to the community to continue their $45 per day per individual drug habit.

- TASC has been and continues to be significantly effective in the reduction of the cost of crime to the community. At $45 per day for 400 clients the cost equals $18,000 per day or $6.5 million per year. To this can be added the savings derived from treatment rendered to over 550 clients in jail, many of whom will discontinue their drug use after release and/or be motivated to seek treatment in the community.

- Whereas the rearrest rate for the non-treatment population has been estimated to be 1.4 annually per addict and only .3 for the group having received treatment, TASC has saved the community the cost of over 2,000 arrests and prosecutions as a result of treating over 1,900 offenders in the jail and forestalled roughly 1,980 new arrests by providing treatment to over 1,650 clients in the community.

- While the cost of an average arrest and prosecution is not currently known to us, it does not seem unrealistic to estimate the cost of 1,500 arrests and prosecutions at between $600,000 to $1.5 million dollars. This of course does not include the cost of the crime itself.

IMPACT INVENTORY
CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Having succeeded in reaching and/or transcending all of our declared objectives, we have found that our success has appreciably resolved many of the conditions we originally sought to rectify. We offer these observations in evidence of this.

- The Jail Treatment programs have profoundly decreased tension and conflict between corrections personnel and addict inmates. As a result Corrections and Rehabilitation Department have applied for a major expansion of the TASC treatment model within the jails.

- Segregation of a large proportion of the jail addict population to treatment has helped the jail to contain further spread of drug abuse to the non-addicted population. It has also permitted the drug dependent to make constructive use of otherwise wasted time.

- The Criminal Justice Advisory Council has endorsed and passed a Resolution (see attached) to urge continuation of the TASC project.

- TASC has earned trust, respect, and credibility with and from judges, prosecutors, public defenders, and probation and parole officers, who increasingly solicit TASC expertise.

- TASC has effected reductions in the workloads of many local mental health centers and most major criminal justice agencies, all of which are presently being overloaded and strained beyond capacity.

- Robert L. Shevin, Attorney General of Florida, in his remarks to the HRS Criminal Justice Conference on Drug Abuse Prevention on February 21, 1975, recommended that "First, TASC Programs or something similar should be established in every Metropolitan area in our State. Second, TASC proves that therapeutic programs can be successful in a prison setting".

- TASC has been instrumental and dramatically efficacious in changing attitudes and opinions of many law enforcement and corrections personnel toward the drug dependent. This has generated a greater willingness of these individuals to promote treatment for addicts rather than incarceration. It has also assisted in an increased awareness and understanding of the addict's special problems and needs.

IMPACT ON TREATMENT COMMUNITY

The advent of the TASC program to the treatment community has generated the impetus for many of the positive changes to which the program was originally consecrated. Among these have been

- An approximate doubling in the percentage of court-referred clients to treatment. Prior to TASC court referred clients to Comprehensive Drug Program represented roughly 8% of their numbers. TASC clients now equal about 17.5% of the total Comprehensive Drug Program population. At inauguration, it was anticipated that TASC clients would represent an average of 10% of the total Comprehensive Drug Program population.

- TASC has radically reduced the amount of time, effort and resources previously incurred on the part of the treatment programs, and the identification, screening, and recruitment of clients in the jail and their representation in the courts.

- Via the endeavors of the Tracking Unit, TASC has succeeded in establishing a system of obtaining accurate, unbiased, and up-to-date client information from the treatment programs. Much of this data is passed on to the courts which are now far more disposed to accept it as truth and with much greater gravity when passing sentence.

BENEFIT TO THE COMMUNITY

It is our contention that TASC has performed a most positive and vital role in and for the community and its addicted population, and adduce the following illustrations:

- TASC has acted as an advocate of community interest in performing its responsibility of returning to the criminal justice system any and all clients who have proved themselves unsuitable for community treatment and/or ascribed as dangerous to themselves or others.

- ASC is the only drug identification, screening, evaluation and treatment program in the jail. In its absence, many judges will be compelled to release drug involved individuals without treatment in order to keep the jail population within mandate of limits. Many, of course, would be released to probation and parole, which also depends solely on TASC for these functions.

- Prior to TASC many addicts were arrested and prosecuted for drug charges only, without any change or choice of rehabilitation, while community supported treatment agencies operated below capacity. This was a clearly ineffective use of resources.

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- TASC has provided a verification of treatment received system for receipt of state and federal funds to treatment agencies for their TASC clients.

- The rearrest ratio for TASC clients is less than 10% while the conviction percentage is far less. This is remarkable in view of the fact that the average TASC client has had over three felony arrests before admission.

IN CONCLUSION

From the summary presented here, we hope you will also conclude that TASC does work efficiently and effectively for those crucial purposes for which it was created. We also hope you will concur with us that our role in the community is exigent and our program should be continued via its inclusion in the County Budget in the coming year.

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R. 143874

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Judges of the Circuit Court of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit, Criminal Division, in and for Dade County, Florida, deem that a formalized diversion program for addict offenders is a viable and necessary function within the criminal justice system, and

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Dade County Treatment Alternatives to Street Crime (TASC) Project has proven an effective and vital method of providing such diversion alternatives, and

WHEREAS, the termination of the Metropolitan Dade County Treatment Alternatives to Street Crime (TASC) Project would result in a major disservice to the Court and the community, and

WHEREAS, said TASC Project is in imminent danger of losing its ability to provide these vital and necessary services because of the exhaustion of its federal funding,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT WE, THE UNDERSIGNED, JUDGES OF THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE ELEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, CRIMINAL DIVISION, in and for Dade County, urge all local and state efforts to provide the necessary support for the continuation of the TASC Project and that we will contact all necessary and interested parties who can aid in assuring continuation of the Metropolitan Dade County Treatment Alternatives to Street Crime (TASC) Project.

WHEREAS, the Criminal Justice Advisory counsel, is charged with the responsibility of Criminal Justice program for Dade County and;

WHEREAS, the Advisory Council recognizes the invaluable impact the Dade County Treatment Alternatives Program has had in improving the performance and effectiveness of the Dade County Criminal Justice system and;

WHEREAS, TASC has demonstrated its effectiveness in the reduction of street crime and the attendant cost of incarceration, police and court cost;

WHEREAS, the non-continuance of the TASC project would place a severe burden on the courts, police and corrections and rehab in dealing effectively with the soaring number of drug related felony offenses in Dade County, and would result in a major disservice to the court and community;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that we the undersigned, members of the Criminal Justice Advisory council, in and for Dade County urge that all local and/or state efforts be exercised to provide necessary support for the continuation of the TASC project.